CHAPTER 159

ECONOMIC INCENTIVES FOR BROADBAND AND WORKFORCE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

H.F. 772

AN ACT creating an empower rural Iowa Act to provide incentives for broadband and workforce housing, and including effective date and applicability provisions.

Be It Enacted by the General Assembly of the State of Iowa:

DIVISION I TITLE OF ACT

Section 1. TITLE OF ACT. This Act shall be known and may be cited as the "Empower Rural Iowa Act".

DIVISION II BROADBAND

- Sec. 2. Section 8B.1, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new subsection: NEW SUBSECTION. 4A. "Facilitate" means a communication service provider's ability to provide broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in this section to a home, farm, school, or business within a commercially reasonable time and at a commercially reasonable price upon request by a consumer.
 - Sec. 3. Section 8B.1, subsection 12, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- 12. "Targeted service area" means a United States census bureau census block located in this state, including any crop operation located within the census block, within which no communications service provider offers or facilitates broadband service at or above twenty-five megabits per second of download speed and three megabits per second of upload speed as of July 1, 2015 the download and upload speeds identified by the federal communications commission pursuant to section 706 of the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, as amended.
- Sec. 4. Section 8B.1, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new subsection:

 <u>NEW SUBSECTION</u>. 12A. "Underserved area" means any portion of a targeted service area within which no communications service provider offers or facilitates broadband service meeting the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in this section.
 - Sec. 5. Section 8B.10, subsection 1, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- 1. The determination of whether a communications service provider offers or facilitates broadband service meeting the download or and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1 shall be determined or ascertained by reference to broadband availability maps or data sources that are widely accepted for accuracy and available for public review and comment and that are identified by the office by rule. The office shall periodically make renewed determinations of whether a communications service provider offers or facilitates broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1, which shall, to the extent updated maps and data sources are available at the time, include making such determinations prior to each round of grant applications solicited by the office pursuant to section 8B.11.
 - Sec. 6. Section 8B.11, subsection 1, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- 1. The office shall administer a broadband grant program <u>designed</u> to <u>award reduce</u> <u>or eliminate unserved and underserved areas in the state, leveraging federal funds and public and private partnerships where possible, by awarding grants to communications</u>

service providers that reduce or eliminate targeted service areas by installing broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service in targeted service areas at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1, in accordance with this section.

- Sec. 7. Section 8B.11, subsection 2, paragraph c, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- c. Notwithstanding section 8.33, moneys in the fund that remain unencumbered or unobligated at the close of the fiscal year shall not revert but shall remain available for expenditure for the purposes designated until the close of the succeeding fiscal year three years following the last day of the fiscal year in which the funds were originally appropriated.
 - Sec. 8. Section 8B.11, subsection 3, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- 3. Communications service providers may apply to the office for a grant pursuant to this section for the installation of broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service at or above twenty-five megabits per second of download speed and three megabits per second of upload speed in targeted service areas at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1. The office may, by rule, increase the minimum download and upload speeds for grant eligibility pursuant to this section. The office shall include representatives from schools, communities, agriculture, industry, and other areas as appropriate to review and recommend grant awards. The office shall conduct an open application review process and include that includes the opportunity for the public to submit factual information as part of a validation process to address claims that a targeted service area is currently served with broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1. Upon completion of the validation process, the office may modify a proposed targeted service area to account for information received during the validation process. The office shall make available a public internet site for identifying all publicly available information contained in the applications, the members of the review committee, a summary of the review committee's recommended results, and any results of performance testing conducted after the project is completed.
 - Sec. 9. Section 8B.11, subsection 4, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- 4. *a*. The office shall award grants on a competitive basis for the installation of broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service in targeted service areas at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1, after considering the following:
- (1) The relative need for broadband infrastructure in the area and the existing broadband service speeds, including whether the project serves a rural area or areas.
- (2) The applicant's total proposed budget for the project, including the amount or percentage of local or federal matching funds, if any, any funding obligations shared between public and private entities, and the percentage of funding provided directly from the applicant.
 - (3) The relative download and upload speeds of proposed projects for all applicants.
- (4) The specific product attributes resulting from the proposed project, including technologies that provide higher qualities of service, such as service levels, latency, and other service attributes as determined by the office.
- (2) (5) The percentage of the homes, farms, schools, and businesses in the targeted service area that will be provided access to broadband service.
 - (3) (6) The geographic diversity of the project areas of all the applicants.
 - (4) (7) The economic impact of the project to the area.
- (5) The applicant's total proposed budget for the project, including the amount or percentage of local match, if any.
 - (6) (8) Other factors the office deems relevant.
- b. In considering the factors listed in paragraph "a" for awarding grants pursuant to this section, the office shall afford the greatest weight to the factors described in paragraph "a", subparagraphs (1) through (3).

 \underline{c} . Except as otherwise provided in this section, the office shall not evaluate applications based on the office's knowledge of the applicant except for the information provided in obtained by the office during the application process or period for public comment.

- Sec. 10. Section 8B.11, subsections 7 and 8, Code 2019, are amended to read as follows:
- 7. The office shall not award a grant pursuant to this section on or after July 1, 2020 2025.
- 8. The office shall may adopt rules pursuant to chapter 17A interpreting this chapter or necessary for administering this chapter, including but not limited to rules relating to the broadband grant program process, management, and measurements as deemed necessary by the office.
- Sec. 11. Section 8B.11, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new subsection: NEW SUBSECTION. 9. The office shall adopt rules establishing procedures to allow aggrieved applicants an opportunity to challenge the office's award of grants under this section.
- Sec. 12. Section 427.1, subsection 40, paragraphs a and b, Code 2019, are amended to read as follows:
- a. The owner of broadband infrastructure shall be entitled to an exemption from taxation to the extent provided in this subsection for assessment years beginning before January 1, 2022 2027. For the purposes of Unless the context otherwise requires, the words and phrases used in this subsection, "broadband infrastructure" and "targeted service area" mean the same as shall have the same meaning as the words and phrases used in chapter 8B, including but not limited to the words and phrases defined in section 8B.1.
- b. The exemption shall apply to the installation of broadband infrastructure that facilitates broadband service at or above twenty five megabits per second of download speed and three megabits per second of upload speed the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1 commenced and completed on or after July 1, 2015, and before July 1, 2020 2025, in a targeted service area, and used to deliver internet services to the public. A person claiming an exemption under this subsection shall certify to the local assessor prior to commencement of the installation that the broadband installation of broadband infrastructure will take place facilitate broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1 within a targeted service area and shall specify the current number of homes, farms, schools, and businesses in the targeted service area that were offered broadband service and the download and upload speeds available prior to the broadband infrastructure installation for which the exemption is claimed and the number of homes, farms, schools, and businesses in the targeted service area that will be offered broadband service and the download and upload speeds that will be available as a result of installation of the broadband infrastructure for which the exemption is claimed.
- Sec. 13. Section 427.1, subsection 40, paragraph f, subparagraph (1), subparagraph division (d), Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- (d) Certification from the office of the chief information officer pursuant to section 8B.10 that the installation is being performed or was completed will facilitate broadband service at or above the download and upload speeds specified in the definition of targeted service area in section 8B.1 in a targeted service area. Certification from the office of the chief information officer that broadband infrastructure installed in a targeted service area facilitates broadband service at or above twenty-five megabits per second of download speed and three megabits per second of upload speed.
- Sec. 14. Section 427.1, subsection 40, paragraph i, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
 - i. This subsection is repealed July 1, 2024 2030.

DIVISION III WORKFORCE HOUSING TAX INCENTIVE PROGRAM

- Sec. 15. Section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph g, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- g. The workforce housing tax incentives program administered pursuant to sections 15.351 through 15.356. In allocating tax credits pursuant to this subsection, the authority shall not allocate more than twenty twenty-five million dollars for purposes of this paragraph. Of the moneys allocated under this paragraph, five ten million dollars shall be reserved for allocation to qualified housing projects in small cities, as defined in section 15.352, that are registered on or after July 1, 2017.
- Sec. 16. Section 15.119, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new subsection: NEW SUBSECTION. 5. Notwithstanding subsection 1, and in addition to amounts allocated pursuant to subsection 2, paragraph "g", the authority shall allocate ten million dollars to the workforce housing tax incentives program administered pursuant to sections 15.351 through 15.356, for qualified housing projects located in a county that has been declared a major disaster by the president of the United States on or after March 12, 2019, and that is also a county in which individuals are eligible for federal individual assistance. In allocating tax credits pursuant to this subsection for the period beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2024, the authority shall not allocate more than ten million dollars for purposes of this subsection. This subsection is repealed July 1, 2024.
 - Sec. 17. Section 15.352, subsection 10, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- 10. "Small city" means any city or township located in this state, except those located wholly within one or more of the eleven most populous counties in the state, as determined by the most recent federal decennial census population estimates issued by the United States bureau of census. For the purposes of this part, a small city that is located in more than one county shall be considered to be located in the county having the greatest taxable base within the small city.
- Sec. 18. Section 15.353, subsection 2, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:
- <u>NEW PARAGRAPH</u>. *f.* For a housing project located in any county that has been declared a major disaster by the president of the United States on or after March 12, 2019, and that is also a county in which individuals are eligible for federal individual assistance, development at a greenfield site.
- Sec. 19. Section 15.354, subsection 1, paragraph a, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- a. A housing business seeking workforce housing tax incentives provided in section 15.355 shall make application to the authority in the manner prescribed by the authority. The authority may accept applications on a continuous basis during one or more annual application periods to be determined by the authority by rule.
- Sec. 20. Section 15.354, subsection 1, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new paragraph:
- NEW PARAGRAPH. c. In addition to complying with all applicable requirements in paragraph "b", a housing business that chooses to be considered as an applicant for tax credits reserved pursuant to section 15.119, subsection 5, shall also submit a certification that the applicant's housing project is located in a county that has been declared a major disaster by the president of the United States on or after March 12, 2019, and is also a county in which individuals are eligible for federal individual assistance. The housing business must also submit documentation that provides evidence that the qualified housing project is needed due to impact of the disaster that is the subject of the presidential major disaster declaration.

- Sec. 21. Section 15.354, subsection 2, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:
- 2. Registration. Application review tax incentive award.
- *a.* All completed applications shall be reviewed and scored on a competitive basis by the authority pursuant to rules adopted by the authority.
- a. <u>b.</u> Upon review of the application, the authority may register the housing project under the program. If the authority registers the housing project, the authority shall make a preliminary determination as to the amount of tax incentives for which the housing project qualifies and scoring of all applications received during an application period, the authority may make a tax incentive award to a housing project, which tax incentive award shall represent the maximum amount of tax incentives the housing project may qualify for under the program. In determining a tax incentive award, the authority shall not use an amount of project costs that exceeds the amount included in the application of the housing business. Tax incentive awards shall be approved by the director of the authority.
- b. c. After registering the housing project making a tax incentive award, the authority shall notify the housing business of successful registration under the program its tax incentive award. The notification shall include the amount of tax incentives under section 15.355 for which the housing business has received preliminary approval an award and a statement that the amount is a preliminary determination only housing business has no right to receive a tax incentive certificate or claim a tax incentive until all requirements of the program, including all requirements imposed by the agreement entered into pursuant to subsection 3, are satisfied. The amount of tax credits included on a tax credit certificate issued pursuant to this section, or a claim for refund of sales and use taxes, shall be contingent upon completion of the all requirements in subsection 3.
- d. An applicant that does not receive a tax incentive award during an application period may make additional applications during subsequent application periods. Such applicant shall be required to submit a new application and shall be competitively reviewed and scored in the same manner as other applicants in that application period.
- Sec. 22. Section 15.354, subsection 3, paragraphs a and e, Code 2019, are amended to read as follows:
- a. Upon successful registration of receipt of a tax incentive award by the housing project, the housing business shall enter into an agreement with the authority for the successful completion of all requirements of the program. The agreement shall identify the tax incentive award amount, the tax incentive award date, the project completion deadline, and the total costs of the housing project.
- e. (1) Upon review of the examination and verification of the amount of the qualifying new investment, the authority may notify the housing business of the amount that the housing business may claim as a refund of the sales and use tax under section 15.355, subsection 2, and may issue a tax credit certificate to the housing business stating the amount of workforce housing investment tax credits under section 15.355, subsection 3, the eligible housing business may claim. The sum of the amount that the housing business may claim as a refund of the sales and use tax and the amount of the tax credit certificate shall not exceed the amount of the tax incentive award.
- (2) If upon review of the examination in subparagraph (1) the authority determines that a housing project has incurred project costs in excess of the amount submitted in the application made pursuant to subsection 1 and identified in the agreement, the authority shall do one of the following:
- (a) If the project costs do not cause the housing project's average dwelling unit cost to exceed the applicable maximum amount authorized in section 15.353, subsection 3, the authority may consider the agreement fulfilled and may issue a tax credit certificate.
- (b) If the project costs cause the housing project's average dwelling unit cost to exceed the applicable maximum amount authorized in section 15.353, subsection 3, but does not cause the average dwelling unit cost to exceed one hundred ten percent of such applicable maximum amount, the authority may consider the agreement fulfilled and may issue a tax credit certificate. In such case, the authority shall reduce the tax incentive award and the corresponding amount of tax incentives the eligible housing project may claim under section 15.355, subsections 2 and 3, by the same percentage that the housing project's

average dwelling unit cost exceeds the applicable maximum amount under section 15.353, subsection 3, and such tax incentive reduction shall be reflected on the tax credit certificate. If the authority issues a certificate pursuant to this subparagraph division, the department of revenue shall accept the certificate notwithstanding that the housing project's average dwelling unit costs exceeds the maximum amount specified in section 15.353, subsection 3.

- (c) If the project costs cause the housing project's average dwelling unit cost to exceed one hundred ten percent of the applicable maximum amount authorized in section 15.353, subsection 3, the authority shall determine the eligible housing business to be in default under the agreement, shall revoke the tax incentive award, and shall not issue a tax credit certificate. The housing business shall not be allowed a refund of sales and use tax under section 15.355, subsection 2.
- Sec. 23. Section 15.354, subsection 4, Code 2019, is amended by striking the subsection and inserting in lieu thereof the following:
 - 4. Maximum tax incentives amount.
- a. (1) For fiscal years beginning on or after July 1, 2019, the authority shall not award in any fiscal year an amount of tax incentives for housing projects located in small cities, or for other housing projects, in excess of the amounts allocated for each category in section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g". This paragraph "a" applies to housing projects awarded tax incentives pursuant to subsection 2 on or after July 1, 2019, and to housing projects registered prior to July 1, 2019, under section 15.354, subsection 2, Code 2019.
- (2) Notwithstanding subparagraph (1), and section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", if the sum of the amount of tax incentives applied for in valid applications submitted in a given fiscal year beginning on or after July 1, 2019, for housing projects located in small cities, plus the amount of tax incentives eligible for issuance to housing projects located in small cities that were registered prior to July 1, 2019, under section 15.354, subsection 2, Code 2019, does not exceed the amount reserved for housing projects located in small cities pursuant to section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", the authority may award the remaining amount of tax incentives reserved for housing projects located in small cities to other housing projects during that same fiscal year.
- (3) Notwithstanding subparagraph (1), and section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", the authority may award during a fiscal year an aggregate amount of tax incentives to housing projects located in small cities that is less than the amount reserved for allocation to small cities under section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", provided the difference between the amount of the small city reservation and the aggregate amount actually awarded to small cities during that fiscal year is awarded during that same fiscal year to housing projects registered prior to July 1, 2018.
- b. With regard to a housing project registered prior to July 1, 2019, a tax incentive shall be considered awarded for purposes of paragraph "a" when the authority enters into an agreement with the housing business for that housing project as provided under section 15.354, subsection 3, Code 2019. Notwithstanding any provision of law to the contrary, a housing business shall have no right to enter into an agreement with the authority for a housing project registered prior to July 1, 2019, until the authority allocates an amount of tax incentives to the housing project and notifies the housing business that the authority is prepared to execute the agreement and make a tax incentive award for the housing project. A housing business shall have no right to receive a tax credit certificate or claim a tax incentive for a housing project registered prior to July 1, 2019, until the housing business enters into an agreement with the authority.
- c. In making tax incentive awards during any fiscal year in which there are housing projects registered prior to July 1, 2019, which are eligible to receive tax incentives under the program, the authority shall give priority in making tax incentive awards to housing projects registered prior to July 1, 2019. The authority shall create and maintain a wait list of housing projects registered prior to July 1, 2019, and such housing projects shall be placed on the wait list in the order the housing projects were registered.
- d. The maximum aggregate amount of tax incentives that may be awarded and issued under section 15.355 to a housing business for a housing project shall not exceed one million dollars.

e. If a housing business qualifies for a higher amount of tax incentives under section 15.355 than is allowed by the limitation imposed in paragraph "d", the authority and the housing business may negotiate an apportionment of the reduction in tax incentives between the sales tax refund provided in section 15.355, subsection 2, and the workforce housing investment tax credits provided in section 15.355, subsection 3, provided the total aggregate amount of tax incentives after the apportioned reduction does not exceed the amount in paragraph "d".

f. The authority shall issue tax incentives under the program on a first-come, first-served basis until the maximum amount of tax incentives allocated under section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", is reached. The authority shall maintain a list of housing projects registered prior to July 1, 2019, and of housing projects awarded tax incentives on or after July 1, 2019, so that if the maximum aggregate amount of tax incentives is reached in a given fiscal year, such registered housing projects that were completed but for which tax incentives were not issued, and such housing projects that were completed and are awarded tax incentives but for which tax incentives have not been issued, shall be placed on a wait list in the order the housing projects were registered or awarded tax incentives and shall be given priority for receiving tax incentives in succeeding fiscal years.

Sec. 24. Section 15.354, subsection 5, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:

5. Termination and repayment. The failure by a housing business in completing a housing project to comply with any requirement of this program or any of the terms and obligations of an agreement entered into pursuant to this section may result in the <u>revocation</u>, reduction, termination, or rescission of the <u>tax incentive award or the</u> approved tax incentives and may subject the housing business to the repayment or recapture of tax incentives claimed under section 15.355. The repayment or recapture of tax incentives pursuant to this section shall be accomplished in the same manner as provided in section 15.330, subsection 2.

Sec. 25. Section 15.354, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new subsection: NEW SUBSECTION. 6. Disaster recovery housing projects.

- a. For purposes of this subsection, "disaster recovery housing project" means a qualified housing project located in a county that has been declared a major disaster by the president of the United States on or after March 12, 2019, and that is also a county in which individuals are eligible for federal individual assistance.
- b. Notwithstanding subsection 1, the authority may accept applications for disaster recovery housing projects on a continuous basis.
- c. Notwithstanding subsection 2, paragraphs "a", "b", and "d", upon review of a housing business's application, the authority may make a tax incentive award to a disaster recovery housing project. The tax incentive award shall represent the maximum amount of tax incentives that the disaster recovery housing project may qualify for under the program. In determining a tax incentive award, the authority shall not use an amount of project costs that exceeds the amount included in the application of the housing business. Tax incentive awards shall be approved by the director of the authority.
- d. The authority shall administer tax credit allocations for disaster recovery housing projects separately from the general allocation and separately from the allocation reserved for small cities in section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g". The authority shall issue tax incentives under the program for disaster recovery housing projects on a first-come, first-served basis until the maximum amount of tax incentives allocated under section 15.119, subsection 5, is reached. The authority shall maintain a list of disaster recovery housing projects awarded tax incentives under the program, so that if the maximum aggregate amount of tax incentives allocated for disaster recovery housing projects under the program is reached in a given fiscal year, such disaster recovery housing projects that were completed but for which tax incentives were not issued shall be placed on a wait list in the order the disaster recovery housing projects were awarded tax incentives pursuant to paragraph "c", and shall be given priority for receiving tax incentives in succeeding fiscal years.

Sec. 26. Section 15.355, subsection 2, Code 2019, is amended to read as follows:

2. A housing business may claim a refund of the sales and use taxes paid under chapter 423 that are directly related to a housing project and specified in the agreement. The refund

available pursuant to this subsection shall be as provided in section 15.331A, excluding subsection 2, paragraph "c", of that section. For purposes of the program, the term "project completion", as used in section 15.331A, shall mean the date on which the authority notifies the department of revenue that all applicable requirements of an agreement entered into pursuant to section 15.354 are satisfied.

- Sec. 27. Section 15.355, subsection 3, paragraph a, subparagraphs (1) and (2), Code 2019, are amended to read as follows:
- (1) For a housing project not located in a small city, ten percent of the qualifying new investment of a housing project specified in the agreement.
- (2) For a housing project located in a small city, twenty percent of the qualifying new investment of a housing project specified in the agreement.
- Sec. 28. Section 15.355, subsection 3, paragraph a, Code 2019, is amended by adding the following new subparagraph:

<u>NEW SUBPARAGRAPH</u>. (3) For a housing project located in a county that has been declared a major disaster by the president of the United States on or after March 12, 2019, and that is also a county in which individuals are eligible for federal individual assistance, twenty percent of the qualifying new investment of a housing project.

- Sec. 29. WORKFORCE HOUSING TAX INCENTIVES PROGRAM FISCAL YEAR 2019-2020. Notwithstanding section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2020, all moneys allocated pursuant to section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", shall be allocated by the economic development authority to qualified housing projects in small cities, as defined in section 15.352, that were registered prior to July 1, 2019. If the sum of the amount of tax incentives allocated in the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2019, and ending June 30, 2020, for housing projects located in small cities that were registered prior to July 1, 2019, does not exceed the moneys that may be allocated pursuant to section 15.119, subsection 2, paragraph "g", the authority may allocate the remaining moneys to other qualified housing projects that were registered prior to July 1, 2019.
- Sec. 30. EMERGENCY RULES. The economic development authority may adopt emergency rules under section 17A.4, subsection 3, and section 17A.5, subsection 2, paragraph "b", to implement the provisions of this division of this Act and the rules shall be effective immediately upon filing unless a later date is specified in the rules. Any rules adopted in accordance with this section shall also be published as a notice of intended action as provided in section 17A.4.
- Sec. 31. EFFECTIVE DATE. This division of this Act, being deemed of immediate importance, takes effect upon enactment.

Sec. 32. APPLICABILITY.

- 1. Except as provided in subsection 2, this division of this Act applies to housing projects awarded tax incentives by the authority under the program on or after July 1, 2019, and housing projects registered by the authority under the program prior to July 1, 2019, shall be governed by sections 15.352, 15.354, and 15.355, Code 2019.
- 2. The provision of this division of this Act amending section 15.354, subsection 4, applies to housing projects registered by the authority under the program prior to July 1, 2019, and to housing projects awarded tax incentives by the authority under the program on or after July 1, 2019.

Approved May 20, 2019